

THE SEGREGATION THREAT IN HOUSING

Can We Plan for Democratic Neighborhoods?

CHARLES ABRAMS

THE cause of racial equality has won some impressive victories in recent years. At the same time, it has become increasingly evident that progress in principle has not been paralleled by progress in practice. Rights advanced on paper have been set back in the field. Social reforms have been enacted into law only to be perverted later into instruments of oppression. Judicial decisions upholding social reforms have become the precedents to support legal devices for excluding minorities.

This gulf between principle and practice is most menacing in the area of housing, where government interest has expanded rapidly since 1933. Instead of carrying the libertarian principles to which democratic governments are committed into the new field of housing, public officials have all too often permitted the publicly aided enterprises to embrace the ethics of the market.

The American neighborhood, which promised to be the foundation stone of one of the world's most elastic societies, is being headed toward stratification by government policies which openly countenance and of-

ten even encourage racial and social segregation.

In its efforts to advance social gains in one area, housing, government may be annulling advances already achieved in the areas of racial equality and personal freedom.

THE most serious government offender against racial equality is the Federal Housing Administration, a federal agency which has taken over the business of insuring private mortgages for a premium. Almost since its creation this agency has been a moving spirit behind the racial restrictive covenant—the instrument whereby homeowners in an area pledge themselves not to sell or rent to “non-Caucasians” or some other excluded group. For years it exhorted use of the restrictive covenant and even wrote the very form of the restrictions.

In 1947, the President's Committee on Civil Rights noted that FHA “has recently abandoned the policy by which it encourages the placing of racial restrictive covenants on projects supported by government guarantees.”

The “abandonment,” however, took place on paper only. FHA's new *Manual* still left the door open for the old practices, and discrimination is indulged in today as freely as ever on FHA-insured loans.

The revised *Manual* says: “If a mixture of user groups is found to exist it must be determined whether the mixture will render the neighborhood less desirable to present and prospective occupants. . . . Protective covenants are essential to the sound development of proposed residential areas since they regulate the use of the land and provide a basis for the development of harmonious, attractive neighborhoods suitable and desirable to the user groups forming the potential mar-

CHARLES ABRAMS' article, “Homes For Aryans Only,” in the May 1947 COMMENTARY, was credited with playing an important role in the struggle against restrictive covenants—a struggle which has registered some notable recent gains in the courts. Mr. Abrams here investigates the place of prejudice in the structure of civic planning: to what extent does government join hands with public housing experts to “plan” race prejudice into urban redevelopment, and what can be done about it? Mr. Abrams is the housing analyst for the *New York Post*, and has taken a prominent part in the current legal fight to abolish race restrictions in New York's Stuyvesant Town. He is an attorney, the author of two books: *The Future of Housing* and *Revolution in Land*, and has contributed to numerous periodicals. He was born in 1901.

ket" (*Underwriting Manual*, Federal Housing Administration, January 1947).

In practice, local FHA directors have become the medium for enforcing racial zoning and segregation by refusing to insure loans to members of minorities in areas where they are not wanted.

In a letter to Senator Robert F. Wagner, the present FHA Commissioner admits that racial, religious, and national characteristics "are given the same consideration as all other characteristics. . . . If the study on any of these points indicates probable adverse effect . . . significantly increasing the risk, FHA is not warranted in accepting the risk. . . ."

In another letter (November 19, 1948), Assistant FHA Commissioner W. J. Lockwood indicates that no loans would be made for mixed cooperative projects: "The Federal Housing Administration has never insured a housing project of mixed occupancy," says Lockwood. He then ventures "the unofficial and informal statement that we believe that such projects would probably in a short period of time become all Negro or all white."

Curiously, at the same time this policy was being laid down, FHA committed itself—perhaps unconsciously—to insure a mortgage on Bell Park Gardens, a veterans' cooperative which, because it is tax exempt, is prohibited from discriminating by the much-disputed New York City ordinance. Whether or not Bell Park Gardens is an opening wedge for changing traditional FHA policies, is still in doubt. But when the contradiction between Mr. Lockwood's letter and the Bell Park Gardens practice was pointed out by this writer to FHA Commissioner Franklin D. Richards, he denied that FHA had ever refused to underwrite mortgages on "mixed" projects and said they had no intention of refusing in the future.

Explaining FHA's "underwriting philosophy," an official memorandum emphasizes FHA's sensitivity to "local real estate market reaction. . . . If infiltration will be unacceptable to the local real-estate market and desirability of properties will be reduced in the market's mind," FHA must "recognize the conditions. . . ." It must have due regard "for

the influence of such conditions not only upon a certain parcel of realty but also consider the reflection of those conditions upon properties owned by other citizens." This federal agency thus not only enforces segregation on its own projects but has set itself up as the protector of all owners practicing segregation.

In a letter to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (November 1, 1948), Mr. Richards said his agency would continue to insure properties subject to racial restrictive covenants.

Thus, despite the provision of the Civil Rights Act of 1866, that Negro citizens have the same right as is enjoyed by white citizens to "inherit, purchase, lease, sell, hold and convey real and personal property," a government agency openly sanctions segregation by lending its aid to those who violate it.

THE alliance between private interest and government aiming at segregation extends beyond the FHA. After 1940, a movement developed to use public powers for the clearance of blighted areas and their redevelopment by private and public enterprise. Laws were passed in twenty-five states extending state and city aid in the form of subsidies or by permitting the use of the eminent domain powers to help acquire the land needed for private redevelopment or public uses. An extensive federally aided urban-redevelopment program has now received bi-partisan support.

Only a few of the local laws bar race discrimination, and it was not long before urban redevelopment programs were being fashioned with the specific purpose of effecting racial segregation. In areas in the South public officials frankly admit their intention to move out Negroes from areas where they are not wanted.

The attitude of some government officials may be gleaned from a 1944 report on "Neighborhood Conservation" by two consultants to the National Housing Agency. The report deplores the movement of "certain clannish, gregarious foreign-born groups, of religious groups, of social groups, and most

important of all, of the great contained and semi-contained groups of Negroes and Jews. We were taught to say in our college economics that 'Bad money drives out good,' says the report. It then recommends a "drive for restrictive covenants." The report never became official but it was soberly classified as a "first approach" by the federal director of urban redevelopment.

In New York City, the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company's Stuyvesant Town, a \$93,000,000 tax-exempt project, openly bars Negroes as tenants. All three public powers in the government's arsenal had been drawn upon to make the project possible: tax exemption amounting to more than fifty-five million dollars was granted; public streets were turned over to the company; and the city used its condemnation power to oust thousands of tenants during a housing shortage. The statute granting these privileges said that this was a "superior public use," and even public property was condemned for the enterprise. Yet the courts have held that this is a private corporation that may discriminate in any way it chooses.*

These urban-redevelopment statutes thus permit an evasion of the Bill of Rights, with all its cumbrous requirements for due process, by having government simply lend its powers, money, and prerogatives to private corporations. And so the forthcoming urban-redevelopment program, the most hopeful force for the rebuilding of the blighted areas of cities, might well prove to be one of the most oppressive instruments for racial segregation and discrimination.

PPRIVATE OWNERS have of course long claimed that restriction is a prerogative of private property. When members of minorities filtered into neighborhoods where they were

not wanted, state powers were soon employed by private interests to keep them out: thus the zoning power, devised to preclude unwelcome uses, was soon used to proscribe Negroes, Chinese, and other minorities. When racial zoning was invalidated in 1917 by the Supreme Court, the restrictive covenant soon replaced it and the races excluded by it soon expanded to embrace Mexicans, American Indians, and Jews. It spread with such epidemic speed that whole cities were soon barred to one race or another.* In May 1948 such covenants were held unenforceable by the courts; this was hardly the substantial victory that has been commonly claimed. The covenants were not held illegal. The court said: "The restrictive agreements standing alone cannot be regarded as a violation of any rights guaranteed to a petitioner by the Fourteenth Amendment. So long as the purposes of those agreements are effectuated by voluntary adherence to their terms, it would appear clear that there has been no action by the state and the provisions of the amendment have not been violated." (My italics—C.A.)

In effect, the court ratified the "gentlemen's agreement," so long as it was enforced only by "gentlemen," i.e., by private arrangements which by-passed the courts.

By holding covenants legal (though not enforceable) the court sanctioned a host of other "gentlemen's" devices that are enforceable extra-judicially. Here are some:

(1) The "Van Sweringen covenant"—long used in Cleveland, Ohio—prevents sale of property without consent of the original owner of the undeveloped tract.

(2) Club membership: no one may buy into a neighborhood unless acceptable to the board of the community club.

(3) The leasehold system: the occupant leases the land for 99 years and may not sell the building without consent of the community's overseers. Before qualifying as purchaser the lessee must live in the area for a year. Point O'Woods, Fire Island, New York, is an example.

* *Dorsey et al. v. Stuyvesant Town Corporation and Metropolitan Life Insurance Company*; *Shad Polier v. William O'Dwyer et al.*, *The City of New York, Stuyvesant Town Corporation and Metropolitan Life Insurance Company* (74 NYS2d 220; affirmed by Appellate Division, December 20, 1948). At this writing an appeal is pending before the highest court from a unanimous decision upholding Metropolitan's right to discriminate.

* See "Homes for Aryans Only," by Charles Abrams, *COMMENTARY*, May 1947.

(4) The cooperative: the house or apartment is leased from a cooperative corporation which has an all-powerful directorate dedicated to limiting occupancy to Caucasians and Christians.

(5) The broker's agreement: real estate brokers agree among themselves or through associations not to rent or sell property to certain races. In many communities these limitations become codes of "ethics."

(6) Agreement by mortgagees: lenders agree not to make mortgage loans where a racial infiltration is threatened. This is used extensively in the South and Southeast where some mortgagees will not lend even where the government will insure the mortgage.

(7) FHA pressures: local FHA officials in areas where Negroes want to build withhold mortgage insurance, thereby controlling racial movements.

(8) The reversion clause: the deed provides that sale to prescribed minorities makes title revert to a prior grantor. The prospective buyer thereby faces an unmarketable title.

(9) The escrow agreement: a deed is deposited in escrow with a third party as escrowholder to assure against violation of a covenant. The escrow-holder, not the courts, would then be called upon to decide whether the covenant is violated.

This list is partial; and even though one or another of the devices may again be attacked in the courts and thrown out, there will be enough left to protect race bias in homes. The use of discriminatory devices, new and old, is inevitable so long as the developer provides them and the public accepts them as necessary for a "good neighborhood."

And the fact is that throughout the country the pattern of racial restriction is rapidly spreading today, despite the restrictive covenant decision and civil-rights laws. Some sections are being listed as "fully restricted" (no Negroes, Jews, etc.) or "reasonably restricted" (Jews, but no Negroes). FHA, banks, and building and loan associations are openly encouraging racial exclusion.

THE tendency toward segregation is not confined to America alone.

War, decay, and a spurt in population have combined to bring on a world housing famine without precedent, and virtually every city and nation on the globe awaits the day when it can build its new communities and supply the shelter so desperately needed by their people. The character of these new communities was discussed at the International Congress on Housing and Town Planning at Zurich, Switzerland, last June 1948, which this writer attended. The old kind of city was obsolete, these planners agreed; people were lost and lonely in the cities; cities are not reproducing the populations necessary to sustain them; people have a better opportunity for realizing their own individualities in small towns. The favored substitute for the outmoded city was to be the self-contained community of twenty to fifty thousand people, fashioned after the garden city. Each community was to have its own industries, shops, parks, schools, and community centers, and would be marked off from the world by a rural greenbelt.

When the conferees got down to the details, however, it appeared that many of the new communities would no longer be the mixture of races, classes, and cultures characteristic of the old pattern. People must be segregated—in one case by race or color, in another by religion, in a third by social position. Today in Holland, cooperatives, one of the most important agencies for rebuilding, cater exclusively to their own Catholic, Protestant, or non-religious members. The architect for the Stockholm city plan favors social segregation, saying that "in neighborhoods which are socially homogeneous, community life will flourish more easily." In South Africa racial segregation is official policy for all classes and even racial zoning is permissible.

One of the salient gains of the Industrial Revolution, the composite (if yet unblended) society of our cities that made it possible for people of all races, creeds, classes, types, and social position to regard and emulate their betters; to mingle in the same coffee houses, theatres, and movies, if they could afford them; to browse in the same libraries or

attend the same forums, parks, and schools, if they wanted to; to marry each other, if they met and cared; all these were now to give way to a uniform occupancy in which culture would have to pass over a rural greenbelt to cross-fertilize. Homogeneity, not heterogeneity, was to be the new principle of planning for the cities of tomorrow.

In European countries segregation policies so far have nothing to do with racial sentiments; but whether from convenience or inertia, new communities are being planned to be limited to one social group: "middle-class" communities, "workers'" communities, even old people's communities. These policies in city planning can be explained as expedients or justified as inevitable; but it will be a tragic human loss if the garden city is to be the forerunner of the ghetto city.

WE ARE faced with the dilemma that the very social reforms in housing and city planning—zoning, slum clearance, and so on—which are thought to advance social progress lend themselves most easily to devices for achieving discrimination. Just as zoning and restrictive covenants, instituted to preserve neighborhoods against undesirable uses, degenerated into instruments for zoning-out "undesirable" human beings, so the clearance of slums is, under our economy, easily made over into a device to move out "undesirables." The cooperative, which 19th-century social reformers hailed as the first organized attack by consumers against the capitalist class, can be conveniently bent into a device for insuring homogeneity in a building or neighborhood.

A major factor in this perversion of the impulse to urban rebuilding has been the shift in the attitude of entrepreneurs toward the government function. Once social reforms seemed incompatible with capitalist enterprise, and commercial interests fought them. Later, capitalist enterprise came to tolerate a few social reforms as the price of preserving its own gains. Today the game is to appropriate popular social programs and remold them to fit private interests. Housing and city planning lend themselves very well indeed to this process.

As a matter of fact, so long as housing remained in private hands the minorities had some chance to break down barriers set up to exclude them. The pattern of small lots with their multiplicity of ownerships and the existence of an open market in the purchase of property enabled the minority to compete for shelter, though with difficulty and at a premium price. With the failure of private enterprise to provide housing in the quality and quantity needed, government intervened to subsidize vast units through aid to private builders and lenders. In doing so, the government agencies were faced with the choice of either prohibiting the private racial exclusion practices as a condition for the aid or ratifying them. They took the latter course. Since the government-aided projects were both larger and more centrally controlled neighborhood units, the new barriers have become virtually impenetrable to the minority citizens.

Those most influential in the housing and planning fields might be expected to resist this trend. Unhappily, most of them are concerned primarily with the physical rather than the social aspects of communities. The city planners proper include city officials, and associations supported by foundations. The first refuse to risk their jobs, the second apparently fear a cut-off of funds should they desert theory and public administration for pressure politics for social ends. Neither will venture into the forbidden field of race relations.

Architects today play a dominant role in city-planning problems and they have, with few exceptions, little experience with and have given little thought to the intricacies of socially democratic environments, the sound tenancing of new neighborhoods, or the essential safeguards in the new government-landlord versus citizen-tenant relationships. Neither the United Nations nor UNESCO has explored the problem. With fresh planning schemes for all her cities, Britain knows virtually nothing about how to build communities comprising a cross-section of social and economic groups in her new neighborhoods. Most college courses in the field, here and

abroad, emphasize physical aspects of planning, not social and cultural needs, and most such courses in this field are still in schools of architecture. And if the technicians know little about sociology, the sociologists know less about housing or the technical aspects of planning.

THE fight to open housing to all groups without discrimination finds itself, despite some legal victories, faced by a determined desire to restrict. Many now believe that a simple legal attack on restrictive devices will not solve the problem: new ones are always available, and the underlying fear that creates them persists. A new and creative effort to break through the stubborn insistence on segregation is necessary. Fortunately, in this writer's opinion, a constructive pattern for such an effort can be found in certain public housing developments.

We must realize that it was only after 1910, when Negroes began to move up en masse from the South, that the Negro began to be feared as a neighbor. Until then Negroes lived on the same streets with whites—indeed it was desirable to have a Negro servant or janitor live nearby. Until recently in fact the American neighborhood was essentially heterogeneous—Italian barber, Negro housekeeper or laborer, Chinese laundryman, Jewish storekeeper—all being part of a single community.

It was not prejudice because of color, religion, or race that brought opposition to the settlement of Negroes—and, in many communities, Japanese, Chinese, Mexicans, and Jews.

The determining factor shifting attitudes from acceptance to restriction is not prejudice *per se* but the fear of a mass movement by a minority. It is at the point when a minority infiltration threatens to be followed by an inundation, that majority resistance sets in. What applies to the Negro in the city is true of the Jew in the American resort hotel. The vicious futility of the practice of exclusion, of course, is that the more it is imposed against a group the fewer the available spaces for it and the more the pressure on it to "in-

vade" a neighborhood once the initial beachhead is established. Obviously, this would not be the case if accommodations were ample and the choice free.

HOWEVER—and this new fact is of the utmost significance—this situation did not develop in large mixed projects able to create and control their own environment. In many public housing projects Negroes have been mingled with whites and there have been mass exoduses neither from the projects nor from the surrounding neighborhoods. This experience is important because if Negroes and whites can mix, then certainly mixed neighborhoods of all social classes and all faiths are practical too.

There are five main types of Negro-white public housing projects: (1) those in which whites and Negroes live as racial units in different sections of the same project; (2) those with only a few token Negro families; (3) those where there is a predominance of Negroes; (4) those where whites and Negroes are mixed within the project in equal or nearly equal proportion; (5) those in which whites and Negroes are mixed, with the Negroes representing a substantial minority, i.e., ten to thirty per cent.

Where the Negroes occupied most of the apartments in the projects, as in Jamaica Houses, New York City, there was a tendency for the whites to move out or not apply for the vacancies; the project then headed for complete Negro occupancy. Where the races live in the same project but are separated, this accents the difference between the races and increases tensions. Where there is a token representation by the Negro he is an uneasy tenant who generally refuses to participate in social and communal activities. Where there is equal or nearly equal representation the project may succeed with expert management or because the tenants are making a gallant demonstration.

But in the many projects where the minority ranges from ten to thirty per cent—sufficient to give the minority the self-assurance and security it needs, and not so large as to spell "inundation" to the majority—ten-

sions subside and racial harmony is soon attained.*

How can this experience be incorporated in the planning of new communities?

It is self-evident that in the building of new neighborhoods throughout the world we cannot escape the responsibility for planning the selection of the people that will live in them. The importance of tenant selection has been underestimated, and it has been left to function without rules or guidance, with the result that ghetto patterns are being firmly established in most of our neighborhoods. In the tenant-selection process the ability of the new residents to cohere into a community is one of the important considerations, and in the course of selecting the tenants we should seek to advance from the prevailing "separate but equal" policy that is only legalized segregation to the true democratic principle of equality among equals. It can be demonstrated that the most successful projects are those with a cross-section of ages, races, colors, religions, professions, persons of different social and economic status, and so on. One of the major errors of postwar housing in America, for example, has been the "veteran preference," which has brought families of a single age-group into whole neighborhoods. Exclusion of the elderly affected community life in unforeseen ways: it meant, for example, a dearth of baby-sitters, and a resulting deprivation of social life. And the similarity of children's ages meant crowding some classrooms while others were not used at all.

On the other hand, "Housing for the Elderly" programs abroad meant unhappiness for the occupants; and in the new British program these projects will be located in balanced neighborhoods.

If our intention is a successful community, tenant selection should also take into account—with no intention of prejudice—the number of each religious faith represented, so as to

ensure adequate support for the churches that are planned; it should consider the problem of how many tradesmen are needed for the area, and if it has any vision, it should consider the teachers, the artists, and others that would help make up the proper social and intellectual climate for a neighborhood. It should also try to prevent homogeneity of income, which is the current American practice, and which automatically types the tenants as "poor."

The ability of the racial members to form into a community is one of the considerations in tenant-selection policy that must be squarely faced, and it must be conditioned by the dominant aim of breaking down the ghetto pattern and restoring inter-racial harmony in our neighborhoods.

The tenant-selection policy would not be based on any generally fixed quota for each group; rather it should lay down a positive direction so that a cross-section of the community will be represented in each new neighborhood. Such a positive policy, prescribing what should be done, can be more effective, in the long run, than the current negative procedure of applying civil-rights laws that only state what may not be done. There is, as a matter of fact, nothing in common, in intent, purpose, or practice, between such efforts to secure heterogeneity in occupancy and the "quota system."* A policy that

* For example, let us look at some of the crucial distinctions between tenant selection, as suggested here, and university quotas, under which students are chosen by arbitrary percentages or as token representatives of particular minorities. In tenant selection we are speaking of *new* neighborhoods, in which the problem has arisen of creating workable democratic communities, as against the present practices aimed at a homogeneous community and the exclusion of certain groups; and what we propose is that the experience of certain public-housing projects which have achieved harmonious heterogeneous communities be applied. In other words, this proposal aims to break up exclusion and to create an effectively working variegated community; exclusion practices in the colleges, on the other hand, have arisen not to create democratic variety but to destroy or limit a previously existing variety, or a variety that would be created naturally were it not for these practices, and if the single standard of intellectual competence and potential was applied.

The quota system in universities will not stand the test I have applied in housing, for it is today

* For specific statements by authorities, see Charles Abrams, *Race Bias in Housing*, New York, July 1947: American Civil Liberties Union, NAACP, and American Council on Race Relations.

has the objective of attaining a workable blend of religions, races, and cultures in a new community is the opposite of an intentional effort to make selection depend upon arbitrary percentages or on proportional representation. A system to effect inclusion of races is not the same as a device whose underlying aim is to effect exclusion.

The test of whether tenant selection is democratic is whether it aims to achieve democracy in a neighborhood or defeat it. And no other alternative seems to offer itself. With government subsidy and control so large a factor in present-day and future housing, unless all races can be represented through some planned pattern in the creation of new neighborhoods, the ghetto pattern can never be broken up and housing operations would simply be replacing old ghettos with new ones.

IN DEMONSTRATING the success of interracial projects in some of its public housing, America has made a significant but virtually unknown contribution toward achieving racial tolerance. The fact that the barriers have been broken in the area of Negro-white relationships suggests that a social, interracial, and inter-religious synthesis can be effected as well.

This experience has already had a healthy effect on private investment. When a New York City ordinance in 1944 barred discrimination in tax-exempt projects it was claimed no projects would get under way. It was contended that higher income tenants would not live in mixed projects and private investors would refuse to invest. Pressure for repeal was unremitting.

Yet millions of dollars in projects are today being undertaken subject to the ordinance. In October 1948, the Mutual Life Insurance Company agreed to advance \$6,- deliberately employed to bar minorities from education rather than as a gradualistic device aimed at ever increasing receptivity to "minority" groups. The only possible basis on which a college quota might be justified would be if its aim were by rapid stages to eliminate itself; if, for example, all universities concerted to raise their quotas to give free choice to minorities, so that the threat of mass influx would not occur and quotas might disappear.

000,000 for the Queensview urban redevelopment undertaking in Queens. Amalgamated Houses is undertaking a \$10,000,000 project financed by the Bowery Savings Bank. The Bell Park Gardens project, an \$8,000,000 tax-exempt veterans' cooperative, will be subject to the ordinance. Though it is not known what proportion of Negroes will be represented, the undertakings are a first important step. The UN non-exempt project in Queens, located in a white area, has operated since its inception as a mixed undertaking, housing people of all races and colors. The new self-supporting \$200,000,000 city program for middle-income families at rentals of about \$17 monthly per room will be non-segregated and minorities will be substantially represented. While some private investors still hesitate, the initial barrier has been broken.

If the fear that "Negroes and whites don't mix" is based on a myth, the projects where "Negroes and whites do mix" represent an important frontier. Yet the story had not even been heard by the representatives of the thirty nations at the Zurich conference, and little is known about it in the American Congress. Indeed, even residents in areas where mixed occupancy has been successfully practiced are unaware of it.

This experience should be explored and made known. For the world is rebuilding—its cities and its principles. Even America, untouched by war, must build houses equaling more than half its present supply in the next fifteen years. In building the cities of the future our generation can either create neighborhoods where races and cultures can be integrated—or stratify them for generations ahead.

THERE is no question that the principles on which the fight for unsegregated housing has proceeded to date are important. Thus, wherever a government extends its aid directly or indirectly, neither segregation nor discrimination is permissible. Shelter is an essential of life, the ownership and use of which may become affected with a public interest, and the public is warranted in intervening when its use results in the exclusion

of masses of human beings from shelter. A conspiracy by property owners to bar men from homes in a whole community because of their red hair or skins, their dark complexions, or the faith of their ancestors is such an abuse of the rights of ownership. As the Supreme Court has said, "Ownership does not always mean dominion." These principles must be sustained and defended.

But principles standing alone are too easily construed out of existence. A broad bill of rights, adequate enough for a laissez-faire society, is too general for the more mixed economy or the social-service state in which the floating area of administrative discretion can become the area of unbridled tyranny. The people in whom discretion is vested to administer the new social reforms are fallible civil servants. We need a new set of very specific criteria that will govern official conduct and administration in the creation and operation of new neighborhoods. They must constantly be defined and reexamined. With social reforms daily increasing the scope of administrative agencies, we also need new checks and restraints, new mechanisms for review and for correction of injustices in administration. The public officials who are assuming the responsibilities for building and financing the new neighborhoods will, of course, have to be educated in these new approaches if they are to create the concrete

patterns of a democratic and satisfying city living. Moreover, city planning, research, education, civil-rights laws and statements of principle, now isolated into five separate compartments, must be integrated into a common program and directed toward achieving it.

There is no pat neighborhood pre-cut to fit all tastes. To Dante anything but the streets of Florence would have meant exile, and Socrates could not be made to go beyond the bounds of Athens. To others, garden cities may now be the ideal. The best living pattern is perhaps the rich variety of communities with freedom of movement from one to another.

But whether they are garden cities, big cooperative communities, urban-redevelopment projects, FHA undertakings, or public housing, none are worth doing at the cost of losing the blend of races, cultures, income groups, ages, colors, religions, and types that were the city's valued assets. Unless we can achieve this, the democratic chaos of unplanned cities may be preferable to the undemocratic order of stratified communities. With a proper grasp of the facts and with imagination in using the various potentials now at hand for rebuilding and reshaping neighborhoods, we may be able to achieve both livable communities and the democratic way of life.